

A. T. Parker
High and Ashland East Side
Sopps

WE AIM TO CUT DOWN ERROR AND ESTABLISH TRUTH.

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SATAN

GETS MORE RESPECT

Than Jehovah Which Is Regarded As
Blasphemy by the Orthodox—Com-
ment On the Death of a
Famous Italian Poet.

AUTHOR OF GREAT
HYMN TO SATAN.

(BY G. W. FOOTE, in London Free-
thinker.)

Carducci, the great Italian poet and Freethinker, who has just been buried at Bologna amidst the grief of a whole nation, made himself famous forty years ago by his Hymn to Satan. The very title of this poem is enough to upset the godly. To treat Satan with respect and even admiration is shocking; to address him as if he were intellectually and morally superior to Jehovah is blasphemy. This is how it strikes the orthodox Christian. But in this, as in so many other matters, the orthodox Christian is wrong.

Satan is the great, vague, impressive figure of the Bible. When the "sons of God" present themselves before the Lord in the first chapter of Job, Satan comes also amongst them, and the Lord addresses him in terms of the highest courtesy. They bow to each other like a couple of old Castilian nobles. And when the compliments are over the Lord boasts of his servant Job as a fine and noble fellow; but Satan throws cold water on the heat of the Lord's exultation by asking the dramatic and searching question, "Dost thou fear God for naught?" This was a fresh view of the case; the Lord had not seen it in that light before; so he resolved to put Job to the test.

Satan is here the challenger. He asks the Deity himself if he is perfectly sure of what he is talking about. And is it not curious that while one account represents Satan as tempting him to take the census—which was certainly a step in civilization? Over against the Lord, with his omnipotence and his co-equal omniscience, stands Satan with the probe of his perpetual interrogation. Ancient custom is confronted with the spirit of novelty—solid conservatism with the quick spirit of revolt. Is it so? Should it be so? Shall it be so? Such is the eternal gradation of questioning which is the vital essence of all progress.

It was this spirit of revolt that Carducci addressed in the Hymn to Satan. In our own smaller way we touched the same point, many years ago, in an Imaginary Conversation we wrote between Satan and Michael. After reminding Michael of his unsuccessful effort to send a breath of freedom through the courts of heaven, Satan continues (in that old piece of ours) in the following manner:—

"I animate all who fight against servitude and somnolence. The heroes and martyrs of liberty and progress 1,335 in every age have drunk of the strength of my spirit. I inspire the revolter, the seer, the septic, the satirist. I still distribute the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. I am the soul of the world. The fire of my inspiration may consume, but it gives unspeakable rapture. I am the Prometheus of the universe, and keep it from stagnating under the icy hand of power. Milton, Goethe, and Byron made me the hero of their greatest poems, and felt my power in despite of themselves. Burns spoke of me with a tenderness he never displayed towards God. Wits and humorists own my sway. I moved the minds of Aristophanes and Lucian, of Erasmus and Rabelais, and through the pen of Voltaire I shattered the mental slavery of Europe. I am the lightning of the human mind. I level thrones and altars, and annihilate blinding customs. With the goal of a restless aspiration I urge men on, until they outgrow faith and fear, until the Slave stands erect before the Tyrant and defies his curse."

The statement that Satan is the hero of Milton's, Goethe's, and Byron's greatest poems is perfectly true. Let us look at the facts of the case for a moment.

Milton's genius dilates to its greatest capacity whenever Satan appears upon the scene. God the Father, in Paradise Lost, is a pompous old fogey, and God

the Son is a prosy prig—but Satan is always magnificent. What a grand picture Milton draws of the fallen archangel, with his splendid presence, his sleepless intellect, his indomitable pride, and his invincible courage. Some of Cromwell's characteristics crept into the portrait. The great Regicide sat as one of the models for the great Rebel—and the result gives the poem its finest majesty. And when Satan is humiliated, as in the hissing snake episode, we feel shocked and pained as at the spectacle of fallen greatness trampled into the dust. This also is very noteworthy. God the Father never shivers at the thought of his creatures' damnation; he is only concerned to vindicate his own character; but Satan, as he watches the innocent couple in happiness in the garden, feels compunction at making them pawns in the game between himself and the lord of heaven, and deplores the necessity of having to do what else, though damned, he would abhor.

Goethe puts nearly all the intellect, and all the best of the morality, of Faust into the mouth of Mephistopheles. Satan thus become, for the great German poet, the spokesman of all sorts of daring ideas and profound reflections. Mephistopheles is the real soul of Faust. Faust himself, and Marguerite, are but the foils for that subtle and audacious spirit. Sentimentalism has made too much of them. For, after all, there is great force in Lamb's question as to Marguerite's value, and his remark that Marlow gave his Faust no less a star of beauty and romance than Helen of Greece.

And does not Satan dominate in Byron's superb Vision of Judgment? Southey, George III., Michael himself—these are all nothing to the tremendous figure of the lord of hell. All the rebellious force of Byron's own nature went into the conception of that grand design. "And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space." Magnificent—yes, and true! For the rebel's spirit must, first of all, cast a gloom over the sparkling inanities of false and foolish life.

"Sabbathless Satan," as Charles Lamb quaintly called him is the ideal of energy and activity. He is also the ideal of intelligence. His worst enemy never called him a fool. Even the clergy admit that he represents what they call the pride of intellect. And thus it is that they call every sceptic who looks as if he meant business "a child of the Devil." To believe what they preach, and do what they say, and pay what they demand is to be a child of God.

Jehovah, on the other hand, only represents irresponsible power. All the bloody wars, all the deliberate wickedness, all the abominable cruelty in the Bible are the work of his hands, or the execution of his orders, or the perpetration of his friends. The Bible calls the Devil the father of lies; but even this is a wretched slander—for when the Lord wanted a lying spirit to go forth and fill the mouths of the prophets so that Ahab might be led on to his doom at Ramoth-Gilead, there was no need to send to hell for a clever practitioner; the Lord found an excellent volunteer at his very elbow in heaven.

Why should not men, if they must worship somebody, worship Satan for a change? We never heard of anything really to the discredit of this personage. He never taught men to love their enemies—and hate all who differed from them; he never incited men to cut each other's throats for a difference of opinion; he never instigated religious wars; he never aided in the oppression and spoliation of the people; he never countenanced slavery and the degradation of women; he never promised to damn people through all eternity for exercising their wits and trusting to their common sense. "The name of God has fenced about all crime with holiness," as Shelley said; but no such charge was ever brought against Satan. He is cleaner, sweeter, more moral, and in every way more eligible as an object of worship than his great rival. But the principal advantage, it appears to us, is that he allows people to think—nay, urges them to think. In this respect, he is an improvement on all the gods we ever heard of. So three cheers for Satan!

DEBATE IN PAMPHLET FORM.

Just out, debate on the Bible and Evolution between A. A. Snow and U. G. Wilkerson, 100 pages, 64,000 words. Price 15 cents. Arkansas Traveler, New Hope, Ark.

SACRED BOSH OF THE HOLY BIBLE

A New Revelation as to How God Created the World and Why He is Not a Gambler. The Creation of Space and the Greatest Thing God Did.

How He Made the World "On the Square," and How it Got Round.

REVOLUTIONARY EARTH BROUGHT

REVOLUTIONARY MEN

(BY JAMES ARMSTRONG.)

"In the beginning God created the heavens and earth!"

It was lucky for God that he began when he started and just as lucky no doubt that he quit when he got through. In making the world notwithstanding Jehovah was all powerful he had to begin at the beginning the same as I have done in the present writing. And yet it is hard to understand why He could not have begun in the middle or started in at both ends and "played them against the middle." He didn't do this, perhaps, because he was not a gambler—didn't believe in taking a chance, and so he commenced at the beginning and stopped at the end of his labors.

It is hardly correct, however, to say that God did not believe in "taking a chance," for there were no chances to take before he began at the beginning to make things. Thus God did not even take time to make the universe, for he made time, too, and pretty fast time at that, when you consider the work he turned out in six days! This is of course a joke. How the deuce—or rather the ace, for there is but one God—could God have worked fast, or slow for that matter? Certainly it would be blasphemous to speak of God as being "fast," although he wasn't a bit "slow" with the wife of Joseph! God simply worked and evidently "worked" himself, as he was the only One there was to work; and that he succeeded in "stringing" himself pretty well we may easily believe from that part of the Scriptures which tells about his drowning the world when he saw he had made a mistake!

How in the world could God make a mistake! He didn't make it in the world. He made it out of the world. You see when God made the world he started in on the outside and worked from the surface to the center. He had to do this because the earth did not have any insides until God made them. Of course he made the outside, too, for God made everything. The fine theological point here is that he began on the outside, and when he finished the outside he got on the inside of the outside and made the inside in where it belongs.

I have an original idea of how God created the outside of things. You see, God is everywhere. Before creation he filled the whole of space, and when he began to create, the first thing he did was to make space. So he pushed over a trifle just enough to make room for the solar system squeezed himself up, as it were, and thus made space. Although I wasn't there I am theologically certain he did this for if God filled the whole of space which he had to in order to keep up his reputation as an infinite God, then the only thing he could have done to make room for the world was to pull himself together. And so after all He began to work on the inside, since it was impossible for him to squeeze himself together from the outside!

"In the beginning God shrunk" is the way I think the Bible should begin. He shrunk to make space for the world, but he didn't "shrink" to make the world! Perhaps he should have shrunk. God knows! Having made space God then made the heavens and earth. He made land, he made fire, he made air, he made h—, too. Oh! Yes, He was a "star" creator. But the greatest thing God did, perhaps, was the creation of day and night at the same time. Seeing however that they would not get along well together, he made the sun whose business it was to keep them apart.

It is not recorded whether the sun was made in the east or in the west, in the morning or in the evening. It could not have been made in the morning because it must have been dark when He started to work; and it could not have been made in the evening because it must have been just about daylight when He finished. Thus we can only say that He made the sun when he made it, and as soon as He turned it loose it began to chase itself around the earth, a thing it continued to do until about the sixteenth century of the present era when running into the telescope of a Dago astronomer it stood still. This is no "josh," for it would be so impious to Joshua little bit even about so sacred a matter. In standing still, however, it may be said without sacrilege that the sun set the moon a bad example, as it has been standing still in the Kentucky and Tennessee mountains for many generations.

As originally turned out the earth was four-cornered, flat and stationary. There is nothing surprising in this, however, when you consider the perfect monopoly God had as a world-maker. The amazing thing about it all is that everything He made was not cornered. The sun doubtless was made round because it couldn't stand still "on the square," and the earth was made "square" because the Lord knew that it would some day have to get around the sun, and being an honest God he did not want the earth to do anything crooked. In spite of all this the earth is considerably indebted to astronomy for trimming its corners and thus making a good revolver out of it so it might stand some show with the shooting stars and other celestial revolutionists.

It is a remarkable fact that after the earth became a revolutionist its inhabitants also began to get revolutionary. This was most likely a simple case of cause and effect, something that Jehovah and his worshippers never did take any stock in; and so when science began to make its way in the world the same crowd who believed in making something out of nothing tried to put on the reverse English, or maybe it was Latin, and make nothing out of something! And I have never understood why the scheme wouldn't work unless it is due to the fact that God and Christians are not schemers, but workers—workers of miracles and congregations. And thus when Galileo said the earth still moved, not because it did not have the rent—for warring Christians would gladly have kept up the rent—why the church moved with it, and it has been hustling ever since to keep from being evicted!

NO BLUE LAWS FOR OKLAHOMA

Sound Doctrine Promulgated by a Daily Newspaper Published in the New State On the Sunday Law Question.

The Daily Oklahoma, in the issue of February 9 last, commenting on the prospective enactments of the newly created Legislature of that State, has the following to say, editorially:

EXIT THE "BLUE LAWS."

The "blue laws" of the Puritans, which had their inception in the com-

pact signed on board the Mayflower in 1620, and which were injected into the code by the founders of the colony, are to be practically wiped from the statute books of Massachusetts, and the people of the old Bay state may play golf, base ball or other games on Sunday, and do many similar things which the present laws forbid.

This action of the Legislature will permit the delivery of perishable goods and theatrical baggage.

This action also settles a long dispute between the navy and the preachers of Provincetown. The sailors of the North Atlantic fleet with their own money bought a piece of land near Provincetown and fitted it up as an athletic field, giving it the name of Bob Evans field. They have never been permitted to use it, however, owing to the objection of the preachers of Provincetown, who insisted upon the strict enforcement of the law. The controversy became so bitter that the navy department threatened to establish another Sunday rendezvous for the fleet, holding that it was absolutely necessary to provide recreation for the sailors of the fleet.

The changing sentiment of New England, which has always been held up as a shining example by advocates of restrictive Sunday and sumptuary laws, will be noted with interest by both friends and opponents of the idea that the minor portion of a community or a commonwealth shall determine the privileges of the whole.

NOVEL PROPOSITION TO CHRISTIANS

Author of Endless Prayer Chain Asked To Furnish a Guarantee and the Writer Will Have a Copyright.

(BY N. L. CLARKE)

The enclosed so-called "endless prayer" was sent to me. The copy attached explains itself.

You will note the signature, there is nothing said about what will happen if the chain is broken.

You please note that the prayer was sent out by Bishop Lawrence, but neither he nor the writer who sent it to me gives a personal guarantee that such will be the case and asserts that "it is said that each will experience great joy on the ninth day."

Now I want the Bishop to either put up his personal guarantee that such is the case before I go to such trouble, or the writer who sent it to me. If they don't and I do make up my mind to try it and I don't receive the promised joy, I am going to say that he lied, and if it was the writer that promised the joy and I don't receive it, I am going to say that the promise was based on superstition and should not be practiced only to a view to improve the writer in writing and to increase the revenue of the post office.

I think it a good scheme for fourth-class post offices and I think since writing the above I shall try the experiment with my patrons as I am postmaster and if it works well I shall rejoice as such is promised in the "endless prayer chain."

I am going to withhold my thanks to the Bishop for the idea until I try the experiment and if it works well I am going to take out a copyright and sell it to all fourth-class postmasters.

Please allow me to give the readers of the Blade a little bit of information and history of myself in order to show the relationship that exist between Jesus and myself. I think we are close kin, and I would be glad for some reader of the Blade that is an expert in tracing relationship to tell me what kin we are.

His step-father was a Jew, and so was mine; his was a carpenter and mine was a merchant; his took charge of him at birth, mine took me at five years old; his father died and so did mine; Jesus was a Socialist, and so am I; he loved wine, and so do I; he stole a mule, and I am thinking I will have to do the same; he was crucified, and I don't know what in the devil will become of me.

Any information on the above will be thankfully received by me.

NOTICE

A few more of those books left. Paine's Age of Reason and Facts worth knowing. Both books for fifteen cents in stamps—less than the wholesale price. For missionary work. Address: A. B. BENNETT, Norwalk, Conn.

HOT

LETTER TO BISHOPS

Written by F. F. Passmore When the Methodist Conference Was Held In Denver Some Years Ago.

REPRODUCED BY

PERSONAL REQUEST.

The following caustic letter was first published in the columns of the Seed Sower, at Indianapolis, upon the occasion of a conference of the Bishops of the Methodist church at Denver, Colo. Our readers will find much of interest in it and it is now reproduced in the Blade upon request of a personal friend and subscriber:

PASSMORE'S OPEN LETTER.

The Great Denver Preacher Writes a Hot Letter to the Bishops of the Methodist Church.

On Some of the Great Questions of Day.

Dear Bishops:—I write you some of the great questions that are facing us as the professed ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. I crave your attention while I point out what an unfaithful ministry has done in the past and is doing today, to uphold wrong, oppression, ignorance, immorality and crime, and to lead the people away from Christ rather than to him.

You see, or should see, that the criminal classes are ruling this nation and the church, and that in the midst of plenty there is poverty, hunger, want and starvation, and that a wave—a black wave of immorality and general ruin—is rolling across this nation.

We have no Sabbath, the worst men are promoted to office, the poor are oppressed, womanhood is outraged, drunkenness, gambling, horse racing, political corruption, suicides, lynching, and burning men alive after mutilation, are some of the things that we see in this country that claims to be a Christian nation; a nation that has 18 Methodist bishops, 30,000 Methodist preachers and some millions of Methodist members; a nation that one third of her population claims to be Christian. For very shame!

I think it time to call a halt, and see where the trouble lies, and who are responsible for the condition of things as we see them today.

Dr. Hamilton said at our Boulder conference, a year ago, that a hiring ministry prolonged the age of slavery. He could have said that a hiring ministry was the cause of slavery.

I have been looking about to see where our bishops and great ministers stand in regard to right and wrong, and I am sorry to say that in most cases I find them on the side of money and corruption, and against the Lord Jesus Christ and his cause.

It is said that Republicans compelled women on Market street in this city (Denver) to go to the polls and vote the Republican ticket at the late election. The M. E. Church had a candidate, Bro. Webb, on that ticket for sheriff. Chancellor McDowell and Bro. Brooks, of Golden, stood up in preachers' meeting and advocated the election of Bro. Webb, for whom the fallen women, it is said, were forced to vote. For very shame Christian Ministers, indeed!

When our bishops and leading ministers are in a league with saloons, breweries, Sabbath desecrators, oppressors of the poor, despoilers of woman's virtue, gamblers, harlots and the nation destroying Republican party, it is time for some one to speak out and interpose an objection against the church being made an agent of evil in the cause of sin and darkness. As no one just now seems inclined to the task, by God's help I address myself to the duty.

The Christianity of Christ is the hope of the world. Christian men have always been the salt of the earth, the light of the world; but the ministry as a class opposed the progress of man, and with the church as an organization have through the ages been on the side of wrong against the right, on the side of the oppressor against the oppressed, the slaveholder against the slave. It was

(Continued on Page Four)